THE TOSSPOT

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1. JANUARY A.S. XVII

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THE TOSSPOT VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY, A.S. XVII

8 Caerthen Twelfth Night
15 Outlands Coronetting
22 Officers' Meeting
Fighters' Practices Start Again
Find Raising and Birthday Revel at Kevin's Roman Bath Place

FEBRUARY

12 Mardi Gras – Caer Galen
18–21 Burro Creek War (Including travel time)

MARCH

? Personna Revel – Lady Aleen, 1–830–2373

APRIL

9 Colour Court

JUNE

11 Egyptian Revel – Caerthe
18–19 Baronial Arts & Sciences

JULY

2–3–4 Hunt – House of Sea Star

SEPTEMBER

? Formal costume ball

OCTOBER

1 Fortress Revel

The calendar of events will be updated monthly, and we will provide details on the events when possible, unless such news will arrive hopelessly late.

Art in this issue is graciously provided by Mssrs. Salas and Torger. I hope I have spelled their names right, as I was not able to speak with them personnally, in time for this printing. If possible, we will be exhibiting more of their top–noch work in future issues, and perhaps will be able to give you some details on the artists themselves. I just wish our reducer had given us a cleaer copy. Their originals were even better.

——Dafydd——

IN THE BEGINNING

Prior to the organizational meeting of the incipient shire which exists in the area mundanely called Fort Collins, Colorado, there was but small activity relative to the Current Middle Ages. Significantly, there was a demonstration of the arts of sword-play and dying given at the Medieval Faire, held in the month of October and sponsored by a mysterious group which calls itself "The Foothills Unitarian Church."

Following this there were regular fighter practices held each Saturday. Finally, on November 6, 1982 (C.E.) an organizational meeting was held in the dwelling of Marshak the Golden Wolf and Morrigan at 1713 Pecan.

At this revel, officers were elected for the shire. The primary officers are listed in the front cover, and their assistants are:

Assistant Seneschale: Marshak the Golden Wolf (Don Krause)
Assistant to the Healer: Aase Den Selige (Lise Pederson)
Master of Arts and Sciences, His Assistant: Aurien Chimerstone (Amy Chu)
The Chronicler, His Assistant: Dafydd Ap Mywell (Jim Christian)
Military Advisor: Genin Ichiban (Who knows?)

We also discussed the matter of Society memberships, medical forms for fighter practice, the absence of a location for indoor fighter practice (a necessity in the vile climate which graces this benighted area for about half of the year), Caerthen Twelfth Night, the possibilities of a prize tourney to be held in this shire, and some of the logistics of attending a war held in the somewhat warmer southern reaches (volunteers should be plentiful at that time of year). Naming the shire was discussed, but deferred until the next revel due to a small dissenting minority.

The meeting was ended with great rejoicing and followed with a bardic circle.

On December 5, 1982 a revel was held at the haven of Christopher Longstaff and Arlena of Stonymede. At the business meeting, a name was selected for our shire. According to the vote, the first choice for our name was Stone Haven, the second choice was Dun Cuhlain and the third choice was Harp Sword.

The name of the newsletter was announced, and ratified by rousing and unanimous acclamation. The meeting was concluded amid much joy. What followed included eating, gaming, dancing and song.

THE PLAY'S THE THING

During our last revel here in Stone Haven, I noticed some things. One was the poor, lonely cloved orange, which did not get started around the revellers for more than two hours. Another was the limited participation in the dancing (especially cutting in, or kidnapping). A third was the seeming reticence at the bardic circle. It seems to me that we as a shire (and I include myself in this) are not very relaxed in the medieval mode as yet. One of the greatest evils foisted upon us in this "modern" society (not the SCA) is the constant demand for professionalism. I know from personal experience that many lovely voices are not raised in song outside the bathroom. Medieval man was fortunately denied the "blessing" of viewing many professional entertainers at the flick of a switch, and God be praised that there was not magnetic tape that could be spliced to produce a "perfect" performance. One of the strengths of the age was that most performers of any art and most practitioners of any craft, no matter how "unprofessional" and possibly mediocre, could get a hearing from an audience, and could be appreciated for the skill, talent,wit, and enthusiasm that they did have rather than being measured against a synthetic and unrealistic standard.

Face it! If you do not get kicked out of church for singing badly (and I have yet to hear of anybody who actually was), you will not be banned from a bardic circle for a like offense. None of us are professional singers, dancers, fighters, or anything else, and all of these activities were considered appropriate for the gentles of both sexes during the Middle Ages, with the exception of fighting for the ladies. The qualities most demonstrated by medieval people were a joy in living (rather than in watching others live), a degree of boldness or forwardness in all sorts of activity, and a spirit of play which served as spice for their lives. These ar e things our own mundane lives frequently lack. There are dishes which require quantities of spices in their preparation which seem to be excessive. Beef Stroganoff is an example. If you don't have (what seems to be) too much pepper in it, you don't have enough pepper (for it to taste good). Even so with disovering our true identities in our personae, if we do not use what seems at first to be too much boldness, out personae will be insipid and (it galls me to say it) mundane. After all, faint heart ne'er won fair maiden (or handsome knight), and it missed out on a lot of the fun at the revel, to boot.

--Your Chronicler--

A note of thanks is in order to all the visitors from Caer Galen who helped make our last revel a success in spite of the leaks in the roof. Your dancing, songs and teaching all helped us. We thank you and hope you can return often.

--Stone Haven--

MEDIEVAL ETIQUETTE

In our attempts to recreate the Middle Ages, certain aspects of social intercourse are worth noting since they are so very different from the manners and customs that we are used to . The code of chivalry and the courtly love ethic evolved because of the special social milleu which prevailed at the time. Economic and political power was concentrated in the hands of a very few, and efforts were made to retain and expand this power through alliances which were cemented by marriages whose only motive was power. In general, there were very few ladies of gentle birth in any given "small" political unit. Even in such a fabled area as King Arthur's court at Camelot, there were very few ladies of gentle birth. Since they were the ladies of the rulers, they were very powerful politically. The Lord of the keep, or the Baron, or the ruler of the area would subsidize the knights of his area, and would keep them about for military security. These med of gentle birth usually had no wives, or at least none at court with them. Even though they were of gentle birth, they were not very powerful politically. Because of the power of the ladies (derived from their political connection with the ruling powers), it was pretty much ladies' choice on anything and them men were reduced to the role of supplicants. Because of the power and consequent security of the ladies, much greater forwardness on the part of the men could be tolerated. This forwardness involved both verbal repartee that would result in at least a slapped face today, and a degree of physical contact that has been seen as grounds for divorce, spouse murder, and crimes of passion as late as 1940. Because of the political and social power of the husbands, many of whom could administer both high and low justice, much greater flirtations on the part of the wives could be tolerated by the husbands. However, most intercourse was social rather than sexual in spite of the great emphasis on "love" and the "rites of Venus" which shows up in songs, poems, and other literature of the period.

Since most marriages were politically motivated, love came to be the idealized state, since many of the gentles had no opportunity to experience it in marriage. This has come down to us as a passion for "falling in love" and marrying for love in a fashion which ignores all obstacles (even the ones that cause many of our modern love-matches to end in divorce).

Love was the ideal, but the mortality of the day, while being superficially looser than much of what we consider "normal" today was sufficiently rigid to discourage infidelity to one's spouse, and to discourage the seduction of the wife of one's Lord. Besides, that's what God made serving wenches for (according to the thought of the time). This gave rise to a combining of yoga-like discipline with the ideal of love, rather than an orgy of licentiousness. What it did not give rise to was the idea of marrying one's beloved. The political marriage so soured the medieval gentles on the idea of marriage that it was said that love could not

exist between people married to each other, that in fact, the best that marriage partners could have was a degree of affection and not true love at all.

It is therefore proper, in recreating the manners of the time, to dance with, speak intimately with, flirt with, even kiss and embrace ladies or gentlemen that one would otherwise (mundanely) avoid on either moral or social grounds. The social consequences of A.S. XVII, or 1150 A.D. are far less than the social consequences of 1982 A.D., and it is different largely due to the difference in the ends between the times. The ends of 1150 A.D. are largely not bed as the ends of 1982 A.D. seem frequently to be. The social intercourse is much less involving that in seems. The rejection of advances, if such was necessary, was not seen as emotionally damaging, and in truth, it was not. It does not need to be an invitation to a permanent commitment to engage in what was thought to be mere pleasantry, and it does not need to be hypocritical, shallow, insincere tactics with the only end being seduction. There was a middle ground which could be sought for and practiced which included much of the possible pleasure of both extremes and very few of the pains of either.

The mundane world is just that, and it may be forgotten like an unpleasant dream as it pales to insignificance beside the pleasures and wonders of the current middle ages. The freedom to be bold is there since protection offered by the code of conduct which permits the pleasure but denies the license. The pleasures of society and the joy of life is offered by control which is not less rigid than the mundane mores, but merely different.

--Fionn Craig--

Submissions to The Tosspot, both art and textual, will be both used and appreciated. I would like to encourage everyone to contribute (especially if you don't like my articles). Articles on any sort of art, science, craft, or the like are desired. Editing and requests for rewrites will be kept to a minimum. To courage one and all to greater efforts, I hereby declare an open contest. The best article and the best artwork used in a given issue will gain for the author or artist a free copy of The Tosspot. Subscribers will have their subscription extended. To assist in this matter, please be sure to include your name and address with your work.

Be advised, if your work doesn't appear in one issue, it will appear in a later one. Also, should we be lucky enough to obtain professional artwork as we did this issue, you will not be in competition with these artists as other arrangements will have been made with them.

--The Chronicler--

This begins what I hope will be a regular feature of this chronicle, the inclusion of a persona sketch. These greatly assist in making ones perosnna a more real and realistic part of our efforts. In this issue we are including the biography of the oldest memeber of our shire (in Society tems)

MARSHAK THE GOLDEN WOLF

I was born in a small elvish village in Switzerland in 1173. We were isolated in the mountains and had very little contact with humans; until one day, when I was six years old, an old man came to our village.

I remember that his presence caused quite a commotion. A high council was called. My fater was on the council, but I don't remember what his position was. Our elves and the old man stayed in the council for two days. When the council ended, the man came out with an elvish brooch on his cloak. He had been accepted into our village.

His name was Rodrick, and he lived about a half mile from our town. It turned out that he was a wizard and was looking for a quiet place to retire. Over the next two years, my fellows and I became good friends with Rodrick

One night, when I was eight, I awoke to the sounds of swords crashing outside. The cry of "Dwarves!" went through the village. My father grabbed his sword and ran out of the house. I never saw him again. After about twenty minutes, I looked out a window and saw scores of Dwarves running through the village without anyone fighting them. There were several explosions and flashes of light, which I assumed were spells thrown by Rodrick.

When it was obvious that our village was lost, I grabbed a spear and bolted out the back door to the forest. I had not gone far in the woods when someone grabbed me. It was Rodrick. He told me to relax and try to clear my mind. I tried, but it wasn't easy. Rodrick began to cast a spell over me. He covered my memory, gave me a new one, and made some minor shape changes on me.

He told me to go south to Rome and ask for Sir Antonio. He was the trainer at a fighter's school. As I started walk-ing, Rodrick turned back to the village. I never saw him again, either.

I arrived safely in Rome and entered into the school. When I mentioned Rodrick's name (an old family friend), Antonio took me into his personal care.

Since I left the village, I had the memory of a perfectly normal human family with brothers and sister, etc.. I had come to Rome to attend school, and never had any desire to return home. I also had no knowledge of my true heritage.

I left the school when I was fifteen. Antonio presented me with my first set of armor, and a halberd. I found that I

preferred a halberd to a sword in combat. I now believe the reason was my practice with a spear when I was young.

The next day I took the Paladin's Oath and set off on my travels. I occasionally had vivid nightmares, but never gave them much thought.

Many adventures occurred over the years, some of which may be told at another time. I traveled to a crusade in the early 1190's, but spent most of my time in Italy, Switzerland, and France. I spent several years as Sheriff in Ni-tor, France.

Another Paladin, Reger, and I travelled together through Europe for a while. Reger laterlost a hand while fighting a dragon. We killed it, but did not find its lair. It turned out that the beast had been terrorizing a nearby Dwarven village. The Dwarves rewarded us giving each o us a rune sword. Mine had a pommel carved like a wolf, Reger's, like a bear.

Around the year 1200, I noticed that my nightmares had stopped. I spent several months working at Churches to thank the Lord for delivering me from the dreams.

I was traveling through southern Switzerland when I received word that another Crusade to the Holy Land had been organized. Deciding to travel overland, I set off the next day. On my journey, I crosed a land that is know known as Transylvania. One night I was beset by several wraith-like creatures. One of them had some knowledge of magic, and there was not much doubt that I would not survive this battle.

The creature's first bolt of power totally drained my strength. He then stepped up to finish me off. I remember the bright flash of his spell, then an intense pain over my entire body. I remember thinking, "I hurt so I must stil be alive."

I opened my eyes and found that i was lying on a dirt road with trees and blue sky all around me. I had arrived in the Imperium, though I didn't know it at the time.

Several travellers found my lying in the road and took me to a friend's house nearby. The house belonged to Lady Aiglos, a healer. I spent several months there, during which time I learned where I was and how I happened to be here. (Another tale.)

When I was feeling recovered, the travellers passed by again. They accepted my request to accompany them, and we set off to the south. They were from the Freehold of the Great River, Principality of the Outlands, Kingdom of Atenvelt, wherever that was.

We began our journey from the north end of the Eastern Kingdom, so it took us several months to arrive at the Freehold. I took up residence at the Inn and soon after accepted the position as Sheriff.

I found that large battles and wars are more common here than they ever were in Europe. It seemed like every year we packed our hourses and set off to one. In particular was a war

with Caid and the Western Kingdom in Burro Creek.

The second year of Burro Creek changed my life. We had just come upon a group of about five Dwarves. I believe our number was also five. We had engaged them, when several other Dwarves came up behind us.

I was struck in the head and "died" for just a second. I later recoverd (obviously), but in that instant I was dead, something happened. My dreams returned. They were much more real than before and I began to have memories that didn't make sense. I remembered people that I never knew, and a small village I grew up in. But I had grown up in a large town.

After several months of this, I decided to journey once again to the home of Lady Aiglos in the North East. Several freeholders accompanied me, since they enjoyed traveling.

Lady Aiglos was able to see the problem fairly quickly. When I had "died," the spell that Rodrick had cast on me was broken, but my mind had two sets of realities and was trying to bury one. After several days in her care, memories were straightened out and I knew what had happened when I was eight.

Since tht time, I have had to work out the problem of being trained as a human yet having a totally different heritage.

The battle still goes on.

--Marshak the Golden Wolf--

Our Next Revel

The site will be at the Santana Apartments' clubhouse, compliments of Kevin Mackinnon. We got together and inspected the site. I appears that, unlike the last site, this roof will not leak. Maps to the site are available from me. I will also send copies to the Seneschales of our neighboring areas. I have referred to the site as a Roman Bath because it has an indoor-outdoor swimming pool and a whirlpool (jacousie?). Let's hope Kevin can find the on-off switch before the twenty-second.

As for the theme of the revel, it is basically a fund raiser. Try to bring some sort of hand crafted item to offer for sale. The general understanding being that you will donate half, (or $5, whichever is least), to your local group's treasury. If you cannot bring something to sell, at least try to bring a little money, to buy with. All items should be useable in SCA period personae.

As normal, please bring a dessert, your own feasting gear, and suchlike.

Warning! There will be a mundanities tax imposed on anything nonperiod, to include excessively mundane conversation. The only exception to this is non-period swimwear for the modest.

--Dafydd Ap Mywell--

YOUNGBLOOD

THE

TOSSPOT

c/o Jack Bowers
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